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ABSTRACT

The role of education in reaching all children is discussed in this address. The former Minnesota Commissioner of Education describes the major restructuring efforts undertaken in the state during her tenure. Reform efforts were made in six areas, in which the following changes occurred: (1) from input-based education to individualized, outcome-based learning; (2) from ad hoc programs to a comprehensive policy; (3) from K-12 programs to lifelong learning; (4) from monopoly to school choice; (5) from elite to participative decision-making structures; and (6) from the school as a single delivery system to community education. (LMI)

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"EDUCATION FOR THE '90s"

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It is a pleasure to be here with you today at the School Division Annual Meeting of the Association of American Publishers, Inc. As a newly appointed full professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the recently resigned Commissioner of Education for the State of Minnesota I say with enthusiasm and confidence that you are very important to the educational process in the United States.

I have known about your importance since the days I was first an elementary teacher in the seventh and eighth grades in Avoca, Iowa. And even before that when I attended a one room rural school in Hazel Dell Township, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, where we had few books and the ones we had were, for the most part, very old and tattered.

Later when I served on textbook selection committees as a sixth grade teacher in the Omaha Public Schools I delighted in the beautiful new student texts and teachers' guides, full of colorful pictures and tables and white space on the pages, as well as stimulating content. In those days the committees were called textbook selection. Now it would be instructional materials selection.

I can remember a colleague, a supervisor of elementary teachers, saying about the Ginn reading series and the sixth grade reading book, Wings to Adventure, "Anyone can teach reading. All the person needs to do is follow this teacher's guide."

We have become far more sophisticated about teaching and learning now. We have the benefit of new research in the last two decades. We've been provided information about how children learn and the ways in which we can help an individual learn. Yet the teacher's guide continues to be

indispensable to the teacher. You have incorporated the research into the guidance and helps you provide.

That was long ago; the world continues to change at a rapid rate. We are well into the information age with a knowledge based economy. Anyone who deals with information has to be both excited about the possibilities and somewhat intimidated by the sheer mass of it.

With the explosion of knowledge and movement from the industrial age we have had increasing interest in education by business, industry, governors, legislatures, Congress and a United States president who uses education as an adjective before his title.

Most people now say we can't talk about improving education, i.e., simply tinkering around the edges. We have to deal with restructuring the entire education system. One reason is that we have so many children and young people who are not learning.

We know that we have to educate <u>all</u> children. We can no longer afford to have "throw-away" children; there are no jobs for the uneducated and illiterate. Their potential is to end up on the welfare rolls or to be incarcerated. You've probably heard Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich say that it costs $24,900 to incarcerate one person for one year in Minnesota. He says we could send an individual to Harvard or Stanford for a year and give them a vacation as well for that amount of money. The cost to the taxpayers is enormous which says nothing about the cost to the individual in loss of self-worth and dignity and self-actualization.

We also know that we have to have higher levels of learning for all children and different kinds of learning for all children. Higher order thinking, the ability to reason and solve problems, think critically and creatively is a different kind of learning. So are the learning how to learn skills. (I know you have had ways to teach both in your teachers' guides for many years because they were in the sixth grade social studies book, Beyond Our Borders, when I was a teacher at Adams School in Omaha, Nebraska. But for some reason large numbers of our students have not learned how to reason and think.)

During my tenure as Commissioner of Education in Minnesota we made major changes in six different areas in our efforts to restructure the system.

We began the change from inputs to outcomes. Outcome-based learning will radically change the education system when individual students can move at their own pace through the required and elective learning. Rules and regulations for clock hours and seat time will be abolished. Social promotion will not be necessary. Instruction will be tailored to the particular needs of the students. Students will be taught individually, in small or large groups, and in multiage groups.

Technology makes it possible to manage individual learning for each of the students. Computers are used not only for management of instruction but for the delivery of instruction. Tandy's DeskMate and SchoolMate are examples.

This past weekend I was in Phoenix to attend the National Advisory Committee of Jostens Learning Corporation. Their latest work in science, done in collaboration with the State of California and the National Science Foundation, holds great promise for learners to work at their individual pace. Jostens' building of their mathematics programs on the work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics holds equal promise, not only for individual pacing, but for the state of the art in mathematics content and process. And, of course, individual students have research possibilities galore in the Compton's Encyclopedia data base.

The teacher becomes a manager of learning in an outcome-based education system. The roles of the paraprofessionals, teacher aides, peer tutors, volunteers, and parents also change.

What are the outcomes? I've mentioned different kinds of learning--higher order thinking and the learning how to learn skills. We'll see new and different ways to integrate learning, i.e., vocational education with regular education. We will also see multicultural, gender fair education, environmental education, international education, peace education, drug prevention education, AIDS prevention education, and community service integrated in the curriculum. With so much new knowledge and so many pressures to include more knowledge in the curriculum we simply have to get better at integrating areas of learning. Instruction is changing as rapidly as the curriculum and assessment is not far behind.

Even though there are many advocates of including additional content areas in the curriculum and of changing instructional strategies to do so there are others who believe we should deal only with the humanities and

the sciences. Their cry of "less is more" is being heard by some educators.

Changing from ad hoc programs to a comprehensive policy for children at risk is another way of restructuring education.

The general education system graduated about 25 percent of all students in 1925, 50 percent in 1950, and 75 percent in 1975. In Minnesota 91.4 percent of the students graduated from high school in 1987. Governor Perpich has challenged the educators and local board members to achieve a 96 percent graduation rate by 1996. I believe it is possible because of a comprehensive policy for children at risk. The policy includes education of pregnant minors and minor parents in an attempt to break the cycle of poverty and welfare from one generation to another. The policy includes mandatory school attendance for minor parents receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), provision for transportation and child care so minor parents can attend school, and career planning with minor parents through social services.

The last time I saw an annotated list of our comprehensive policy, the list included forty-three separate items. (I am sure Joleen Durken in the Minnesota Department of Education would be happy to furnish you a copy if you have a special interest.)

Changing from kindergarten through twelfth grade to lifelong learning is a third way in which the education system is being restructured.

Special education policy in Minnesota now requires education from birth to age 21. Programs are in place to assure an orderly transition for

special education students in secondary school to move to employment or postsecondary institutions.

Early education for handicapped children from birth to age 5 and prenatal care for expectant mothers are examples of collaborative programs among the departments of education, health, and human services.

Early Childhood Family Education programs in 300 of 435 districts are designed to strengthen families by helping parents provide effectively for their children's learning and development. Early childhood screening for health problems is carried out in every district.

Research indicates that for every dollar spent on three- and four-year-old children who are at risk of learning, there will be $4.75 saved before they become adults.

Early childhood family education, preschool and day care experiences, as well as educational programming on television, provide learning for some children prior to entering kindergarten.

Among the adult learners, displaced workers from Minnesota mines, farms, and homes demonstrate that it is often necessary for people to be retrained and reeducated several times during their working careers. The public libraries, community education, adult basic education, and veterans education are examples of institutions and programs in addition to the technical colleges, community colleges, and universities which make lifelong learning possible in Minnesota.

As we move toward lifelong learning, the lines are blurred between early education and kindergarten. Lines are also blurred between grade twelve and postsecondary education.

A fourth way of restructuring the education system is moving from monopoly to choice. Choice changes the power structure of the system. Parents and students now make school enrollment decisions which were previously made by the local school board upon recommendation from the superintendent. The choice programs in Minnesota include Postsecondary Options Act (1985), High School Graduation Incentives (1987), and Open Enrollment (1987 and 1988).

New roles for parents, students, teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents, and local board members are being determined and defined in the early stages of implementation of choice.

The issues around educational choice can be thought of as a triad. At the one point is the policy of choice. At the second point is consumer information including information about the growth and development of children as well as parental understanding of the appropriate program to help their children learn, grow, and develop.

The third point of the triad should be labeled diversity of learning environments. The student needs to be able to choose from an array of schooling opportunities.

A fifth way of restructuring the educational system is changing from a few leaders to many leaders.

School site management implements the principle of decision making which states that those most affected should be involved in the decision making. Teachers, parents, principal, support staff, and students have authority in decision making for financial, human, time, and space resources for the school.

Authority and discretion at the school building level will continue as parents and teachers ask for, or demand, to be included in decision making. Technical assistance will need to be provided for all those involved.

As teachers are empowered the workforce will be restructured. The responsibilities of the staff will be differentiated. The individual school will be held accountable for the learning of all students in that school. This means that the people at the individual school will determine the instructional design to best meet the needs of the student, the curriculum materials, the assessment measures, and the need for professional development for the staff.

The sixth way in which the educational system is being restructured in Minnesota is changing <u>from</u> school as a single delivery system <u>to</u> education in the community.

The location of learning is changing as education is taking place in the community. The Science Museum, nature resource center, Children's Theatre, specialty learning centers, research institutions, public libraries and more are learning environments. New schools such as the Chiron School and Learning Academy in Minneapolis and the Saturn School in St. Paul are examples.

Youth Development Plans for children and youth, age zero to twenty-one, have been designed in 159 communities in Minnesota under the auspices of the community education department in local school districts. Resources of the community and the student as a resource are components of the plan.

In the restructured school system the people who work in education will be collaborating with other systems in government, business, and the communities. For students at learning risk, it will be necessary to work with human service agencies, health agencies, job and training agencies, and the corrections system. The education system is not equipped to solve all the problems of these learners; intergovernmental agencies will have to share their expertise, ideas, and resources in collaboration with education.

In our efforts to change and restructure the education system in Minnesota we kept the learner as the focal point. We infused the idea that every individual is important, has worth, has ideas to share, and needs opportunities to develop his or her potential.

Before I conclude let me say a word about Nebraska, the state to which I returned fifteen days ago. The policy leaders in this Midwestern state have also adopted educational choice, one of five states to do so. The Dean of the Teachers College at the University, James O'Hanlon, has led the faculty through a process the past two years in which they have determined graduates will be professionals, not only trained people. And I am working with the Chair of the Department of Educational Administration, Ron Joekel, to design and develop a three week seminar beginning June 11 on the campus

of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on Restructuring Education. (You are all invited!)

Thanks again to all of you for the work you've done through the years to make teaching and learning possible--and for your vision in making it better each year. We continue to need and value you as a partner in the educational process.

Thank you.